

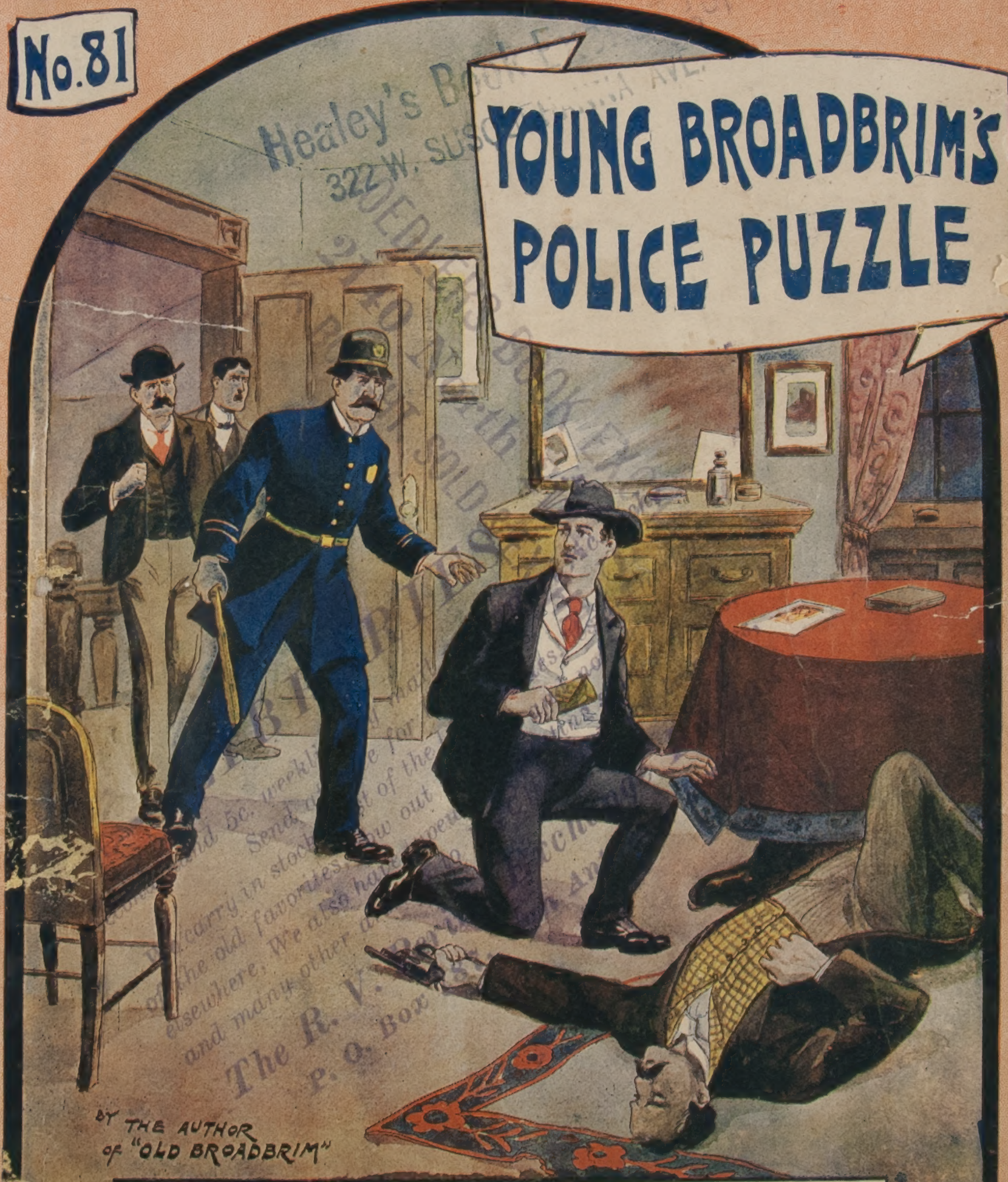
# YOUNG BROADBRIM WEEKLY

FIVE CENTS

MOST FASCINATING DETECTIVE STORIES

No. 81

## YOUNG BROADBRIM'S POLICE PUZZLE



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**The Tragedy of the Tenderloin.**  
By the author of "YOUNG BROADBRIM."  
**The R. V. Perrine Exchange Bureau**  
P.O. Box 787, San Antonio, Texas.

Old Broadbrim handed a letter to his young assistant with the remark:

"Thee had better look after this—I have another case at my hand which I cannot very well leave at this juncture."

Harry read the following letter:

PHILADELPHIA, Pa., Jan. 11, 1904.

"MR. JOSIAH BROADBRIM, New York City.

"DEAR SIR: You may be surprised to hear from me, and to the unusual effect that I am in fear for my life. Your acquaintance with me, I think, will be sufficient assurance to you, of the fact that I am not one to be easily frightened. My career has been a very checkered one, as you probably are aware. I have faced almost every danger in the calendar of life. I began out West as a ranchman and in turn have been a gambler, politician, saloonkeeper, horseman, and last,

but not least, a traveler. I have been in every country on the map, and have made friends and enemies everywhere. These friendships have been as strong as the enmities were bitter. But I have never known a genuine fear until now. Perhaps I am becoming old—and foolish. Nevertheless, I cannot shake off my fears. As you know, I have retired from active life and have taken a suite of rooms at the Harrison House. I took these rooms because the house is a sort of theatrical headquarters, and I have many friends among the professional people. But what I desire is that you send me a man who can be with me constantly. Let him come as my valet. I will pay very well for this. I will explain further when your man arrives. Very truly,  
GUS RIVERS.

"Harrison House."

"When do you want me to begin?" Harry asked, as he looked up from the letter he had just read.

"Thee had better begin at once. Send Mr. Rivers a telegram to the effect that thee will arrive at his

## YOUNG BROADBRIM WEEKLY.

"Well this evening," said Old Broadbrim as he handed Harry a telegram blank to fill out.

Harry wrote a short dispatch, and summoning a messenger boy he sent him away with it.

"Mr. Rivers says in his letter that you know him well. Perhaps you had better tell me something about him," Harry suggested.

"Thee will find Mr. Rivers a man of fifty years or so. He dresses somewhat extravagantly and always has plenty of money at his disposal. I do not think he has done a stroke of work since eighteen eighty-four or five. At that time he was the proprietor of a music hall on Race Street, below Ninth, in the heart of the Philadelphia Tenderloin. It was in the days before the high-license liquor laws were adopted in that city, and the place that Rivers kept was a typical dive. It was one of a number that were opened side by side a block below what is now known as Chinatown.

"Those were free-and-easy days and everything went—mostly to the bad. Thousands of young men have started on the downward path by way of those joints in the old Tenderloin.

"They had women waitresses in these beer gardens; they had women singers on the small stage, which always occupied the rear end of the place; they had women who were paid to entice men into the halls and there relieve them of what money they could.

"They had women, women, women at every turn, and, needless to say, morality reached its lowest ebb.

"The place of which Gus Rivers was the proprietor was known as the Black Bull. Rivers himself was an inveterate drinker and gambler; money came rolling into his till, and went out almost as rapidly. He made several fortunes and lost perhaps as many.

"When his place, among others, was finally closed by the police, Rivers disappeared for a time, but finally returned and fell into his old gambling habit.

"Between cards and horses, he managed to put by quite a neat sum for his old age.

"But in the old days Rivers and the police were not on very good terms, and it was during one of his many disputes with them that I first met him. That was in eighty-five.

"The police accused him of sheltering a gang of thieves in the Black Bull and threatened to arrest him unless he kept his dive in better order.

"He decided to reform the place, and with that end in view he employed me to rid him of every questionable character that I could find about the premises.

"I know for a fact that Rivers was sincere in his desire to fulfill the law, and he did much to assist me in arresting many old offenders who came into the Black Bull from time to time.

"But the cleaning process only lasted a couple of weeks, in which time I had ejected or arrested upward of fifty persons, male and female, whose pictures either graced the Rogues' Gallery or whose history was badly stained with crime.

"Rivers soon saw, as I saw, that to keep his place clean was simply impossible. Crooks from all over the country swarmed into the Tenderloin in those days, and the dives became their meeting places.

"So Rivers let the place fall back into the rut again, from which it had not recovered when the police finally closed it.

"But thee may well imagine that Rivers made many enemies while he was the proprietor of the Black Bull, and some of those enemies are alive to-day and as desperate as they always were.

"It may be that one of the old offenders has finished a long term in jail and is looking for Rivers, with vengeance in his heart, or again, the Black Bull may have no connection with Rivers' present fears.

"However, the case will pay thee very well, and there is no saying just what may come from it."

Harry had listened attentively to Old Broadbrim's recital, and in consequence he had formed a fair idea of the habits and manners of his employer-to-be.

"Thee must be careful of thyself, with him," Old Broadbrim continued. "He will tempt thee to drink and gamble, no doubt, but thee must be strong to overcome the temptation."

"I'll take good care of myself," Harry assured him. "Where is the Harrison House of which he speaks in his letter?"

"It is on Race Street, below Eighth. It is a place

where many of the actors and actresses stop. That will be another thing that thee must watch. Some of these acting women are beautiful in their way and might attract thee strongly."

"I hardly think so," said Harry, with a slight blush. "I know actresses fairly well—as actresses go. I've been behind the curtain enough to have had a chance to study them in their own field, as it were. I can now see both sides of them—the side that they give to the public and the side that the public rarely sees."

"I have no fear for thee, then," Broadbrim assured him. "Thee will need no disguises upon this case so far as I can see," he went on. "Thee looks innocent enough for a valet now."

"Thank you," said Harry, modestly. "I will, however, leave my broadbrim hat behind me and wear a derby in place of it, and I will also take off this blue flannel shirt and get into a boiled one. Mr. Rivers might object to his valet dressing in this sort of *négligé*."

"He might," said Old Broadbrim, with a smile.

"And when Dick comes in, you will, of course, tell him where I have gone, and permit me to send for him if I need him."

"I promise that."

"Let me see, it is now nearly four o'clock. I ought to report to Mr. Rivers by seven at the latest. If there is nothing else for me to do here, I will go home, change my clothes and be off."

"Thee had better go at once. There is nothing for thee to do here."

Without another word Young Broadbrim left the office of his chief upon a certain Monday afternoon in January, to begin upon the most puzzling case he had ever encountered.

By seven o'clock Harry had arrived in Philadelphia and he went at once to the Harrison House.

Approaching the desk he inquired of the clerk for Mr. Rivers.

"Who, Gus Rivers?" asked the clerk, with a familiarity quite inexcusable in one of his station.

"Yes, Mr. Gus Rivers," Harry repeated, intentionally, emphasizing the prefix.

"He was here a little while ago. I saw him a while ago. I don't know whether he went out or not. I might so erratic, it's hard to keep tabs on him. Sit down. I'll send a kid up to his room."

Harry preferred to stand. The clerk rang a large tap bell that stood beside the hotel register on the counter, and soon a small boy in uniform appeared.

"Say kid," the clerk said, in a very self-important manner. "Get a hustle on you. Chase up to seven and see if Rivers is in. Them kids is the slowest we've ever had workin' for us," the clerk remarked to Harry as the boy started off on a run. "Have a cigar?" he asked, as he drew one from the cigar case and laid it down upon the counter. "Them's good ten centers."

"Thank you," said Harry, as he laid down ten cents and picked up the cigar.

"I'm giving it to you," the clerk insisted, in surprise.

"Then have one on me," Harry answered, as he lit his own and left the ten-cent piece upon the counter.

After he had lit his cigar he looked about him.

The Harrison House consisted of two large dwelling houses transformed for the purposes of a hostelry. The smoking room, or reception room, as it might be called, in which he found himself, had been at one time the dining room of one of the original dwellings. It was reached after a long, dark walk through a narrow hallway.

There was nothing particularly clean about the place, not even the motley collection of men who occupied the various chairs about the room. These men would probably be called actors, by virtue of the fact that the stage was their only means of support.

A nearby variety theater claimed most of them for this particular week, and they would soon be making their way toward their dressing rooms.

Several women, vulgarly dressed, came in and chatted a moment with the clerk. Their bleached hair, painted cheeks and loud voices were disgusting to Harry.

He was consoled by the thought that these men and women merely represented the seamy side of stage life and were by no means the best types of the theatrical

...el this evening session. These were the failures of the footlights. Harry a telegram they had either been to the top and could not stay, or Harr else had neither sufficient genius nor talent to ever reach it.

The bell boy returned.

"Mr. Rivers is out, I think. His door is unlocked and his light is out."

"Want to wait here for him?" asked the clerk.

"Did he say that he was expecting me, Mr. Wilson?" Harry queried.

"Oh, yes, he did mention you. Go right up to seven and wait there for him. He won't be long, I'm sure. He always locks his room if he's going out for a long time. You'll find the light switch just inside the door. Seven is the second room at the top of the first flight. Elevator ain't running after six."

Harry thanked him and started up the stairway.

He had no difficulty in finding room number seven. He opened the door, felt along the wall until his hand came to the electric-light key, and soon the room was lighted by an incandescent lamp that was suspended from the ceiling.

Harry recoiled in horror at the sight that met his eyes.

There, upon the floor, in the center of the room, lay the body of a middle-aged, well-dressed man.

His head rested in a pool of blood.

A revolver was clutched in his right hand.

## CHAPTER II.

### A STRANGE COMPLICATION.

Harry had soon recovered himself.

To all appearances he was confronted by a very deliberate suicide. Just who this man was, he did not know, but he naturally suspected that it was Mr. Rivers.

He closed the room door and went over to the inert form upon the floor. He felt for a pulse, only to find that the man was dead, although the body was still warm.

It was quite possible that the tragedy had occurred while he was waiting down by the clerk's desk.

He recalled the letter which this man had written to Old Broadbrim. He had mentioned therein that he was in fear for his life. There must have been some reason for it. Had he been threatened as Old Broadbrim had suggested, by an old offender who held a grudge against him? If so, who could that offender be?

There were no signs about the room to indicate a quarrel. The furniture seemed to be in its proper places. The bed was untouched, and judging from the position of the body, Rivers must have stood before the mirror of the bureau as he fired the fatal shot.

The ball had entered his chest in the region of the heart, and had no doubt caused instant death.

Harry looked at the dead man again. He was very neatly dressed, and his face bore an expression which might have been one of relief. The light plaid business suit was soiled with blood, and a few feet away lay a handkerchief which the dead man had evidently held above the wound as he fell.

There seemed nothing left for the young detective to do but to report the matter to the police. "Clearly it was a case not for his services, but for those of the coroner.

As he raised his eyes from the dead man's face, they fell upon a window, which was open.

He arose and went over to it, and found that it looked out upon a fire escape, which led down into a back yard.

As he stood there, his hand rested upon something wet on the window sill, and he was dumfounded to find that it was blood!

As he examined it more closely, it proved to be the bloody imprint of a hand, with the fingers pointing outward.

Perhaps, after all, his first suspicions were wrong. This bit of scarlet evidence pointed to something other than suicide.

He had slightly blurred the bloody imprint in his contact with it, but sufficient remained to show that it was made by a right hand, for the thumb was upon the inside.

It was a medium-sized hand, too small for an ordinary man, and yet rather large for a woman.

He stepped out upon the fire escape and examined the railing, in the hope of finding some further trace of blood, and, was surprised to find, almost at his feet, another handkerchief, this time a woman's. It was blood stained, and it contained in one corner the initials "M. R."

Here was an unexpected bit of very valuable evidence. If the owner of that handkerchief could be found, she might be able to throw some light upon the mystery.

Further search upon the fire escape proved useless, and Harry returned to the room, to search it more thoroughly. Among other papers upon the table, he picked up and pieced together a note, written in a feminine hand, which read:

"DEAR GUS: I am compelled to ask you again for a little money. I hate to do this; I have tried to be independent of you, and have failed; I may as well admit it, frankly—I have failed. What little money I could make I have spent upon the boy. I am so proud of him, and he must hold his head up among the other boys at school. He is reaching an age now where he wants to know something about himself. It was only yesterday that he asked whether he had a pap like other boys, but I could only put him off with some frivolous answer. He will be six to-morrow; send him a birthday gift of money. We need it so badly. MADGE."

By a very natural deduction it appeared that Rivers was the father of a six-year-old boy. He had probably separated from this woman, Madge, who had been his wife.

But, was Madge the owner of the handkerchief?

Perhaps, after all, Rivers' death had been the result of a quarrel with this woman?

He got out upon the fire escape once more and looked down toward the yard below. The lower ladder of the escape was a sliding one, held in position by heavy weights of iron. This ladder had, from all appearances, not been moved, and it was reasonable to suppose that the person who went down last, swung from the second-story landing to the yard.

Unless a woman were very desperate, she would hardly take such a risk as that, and while a man might have done so, how did he come into the possession of a woman's handkerchief with the initials "M. R.?" Did he purposely dip it in the blood of the dying man and leave it upon the fire escape to cover his flight?

Harry examined the imprint of the hand, again. It was surely not made by the dead man, for the hands of Gus Rivers were much too large.

He turned his attention once more to the note that had been torn to pieces and thrown upon the table.

There were no threats contained in it, but worst of all it contained no date. It might have been written at any time previous to the death of Rivers.

Suppose that it had been written a few days before, and in the meantime, Rivers had either ignored the woman's request, or had flatly refused to grant it. Allowing that, the story of the crime might easily be written.

The woman was in desperate circumstances. Rivers had plenty of money. He was the father of her child. Maddened by continual repulses, she had visited him in person and demanded support. He had refused it. A heated quarrel ensued, during which a revolver was displayed—and fired, either intentionally or by accident.

That was at least a possible solution of the problem, and as a basis for action, could not be ignored.

His first move would be to locate the author of the note; second, to learn whether she were the owner of the blood-stained handkerchief; third, to prove that she had been the last person seen in Rivers' company. Then the case against her would be as complete as circumstantial evidence could make it.

But Harry Wilson was not the boy to stop at one theory. He usually formed a dozen, and chose the most promising of them.

His second theory was this: Leaving the author of the note out of the question, or, at least, supposing that Rivers had given her enough money to satisfy her demands and thus release her from all connection with the murder—suppose that one of Gus Rivers' old enemies, a man well versed in crime, had at last wreaked

vengeance upon his foe? Suppose that the man had entered this room between the time that Rivers had eaten supper and the fatal moment and had deliberately shot him dead. Then, seeking to cover his crime, he had placed the revolver in the dead man's hand; had found this woman's handkerchief, had soaked it with blood, and purposely thrown it where it might be found by the police.

As a theory, this, too, was plausible.

Third, suppose that—as the position of the body seemed to indicate—Gus Rivers had shot himself, and that immediately afterward a woman had visited the room, and seeing Rivers dead, upon the floor, had tried vainly to stanch the blood, and failing, had lost her reason and fled.

While this last did not seem as probable as the first two, it was important for one thing at least, that it concerned a woman.

So, Harry concluded, if a woman was not the perpetrator of the crime, she had been either a witness just after its accomplishment, or had been the direct or indirect cause of it.

But the fact of her escaping by the fire ladder, puzzled the young detective, until, after a moment's thought, he almost laughed at himself for a fool!

Why need she go all the way down the ladder?

Were there not a half dozen other windows from as many more rooms, opening upon the iron balcony?

Of course! The woman had gone out upon the fire escape and had re-entered the house by way of one of the other windows.

Allowing this to have been true, it was quite possible that the woman was fairly well acquainted with the house. Surely she must have been aware of the condition of the room into which she entered. She would not dare enter into a room she knew to be occupied, unless—and here was another possibility—unless she had a confederate.

And yet, she might have been a boarder in the house; she might have rented the room into which she escaped.

Harry began to look about him now for a motive to the murder. The dead man's watch and chain were

in place. There was a roll of money in his trouser pocket. A diamond scarfpin was in his tie. It was doubtful whether anything of value had been taken from his person.

The bureau drawers were examined, but their contents were in such order as to divert suspicion. The drawers contained the usual assortment of gentleman's wear. The washstand held nothing of value, and was in good order.

A trunk in one corner of the room held an assortment of expensive, though rather horsey clothes.

In the upper tray Harry found a tin box. The key was in the lock of this, and, raising the lid, Harry saw a number of papers. A life-insurance policy, another, another and yet another. Four policies. Harry quickly figured that they called for a hundred thousand dollars! Here, indeed, was sufficient incentive for murder! Without exception, Margaret Rivers was named in them as the beneficiary. This Margaret Rivers was probably the Madge of the torn note.

Beside these policies the box held numerous other papers. A number of I. O. U.'s, most of which were from ten to twenty years old, whose amounts ranged anywhere from five to five hundred dollars.

A marriage certificate next came to light. It was marked in the margin "copy." This Harry placed in his pocket, together with his next find—a note from a friend, concerning this marriage.

At the bottom of the box he came across the stub of a check book in which he found a number of checks to have been made out to "M" for five, ten and fifteen dollars. They were drawn on the Northern Trust Company. Harry made a memorandum of the date and number of the last of these and determined to learn who this mysterious "M" was by way of the bank.

He closed and locked the box and placed the key in his pocket for safe keeping.

Why had the key been in the lock?

The last check stub was dated three days before, and the check had been drawn to Morris Rivers!

Here was another M. R. to confuse him.

This Morris Rivers was probably a relative of the dead man.

Never before in all his experience had Young Broadbrim been confronted with so many contradictory theories at the beginning of a case. He knew not where to start upon the trail.

As he stood by the window, turning the matter over in his mind, he saw some one looking down upon him from a third-story window of the house across the way—the other half of the hotel.

Immediately, he lowered the window and pulled down the shade. He was not yet ready to make his ghastly discovery public.

He determined, first of all, to go down and look at the register, in order to learn whether there was a person in the house whose initials were M. R.

As he started for the doorway, he glanced at the dead man again, and paused.

In his left hand he held something that glistened in the light.

It was strange that he had not seen it before, but the only explanation of this was that the light had not fallen upon it at the right angle.

It was a long strand of golden hair.

Just as he placed this in his wallet, some one burst into the room. It was a policeman, followed by the hotel clerk—and the man whose face he had seen at the third-story window across the way.

"You're under arrest!" said the officer.

"I'll appear against him," said the stranger.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE ACTRESS.

To Young Broadbrim this unexpected situation was so utterly ridiculous that he could not repress a desire to laugh outright.

"You see, he's crazy," said the stranger.

"We'll have to put the cuffs on him," the officer suggested.

"I thought he acted queer while he was talking to me down at the desk," chimed the clerk.

"Will you kindly shut the door?" Harry asked, when his laughter had subsided and he had recovered his

poise. "Publicity interferes with the interest of justice."

"Will you come along with me peaceably, then?" said the officer.

"I do not expect to," was Harry's calm reply. "What is the charge, may I ask?"

"Charge!" echoed the stranger. "When I, with my own eyes saw you kill him?"

"Indeed," said Harry, undisturbed, "you should have a prominent position on the Philadelphia police force; you have the marvelous faculty of seeing a crime before it is committed."

"Don't let him lie out of it!" the stranger persisted. "See, there's blood on his right hand! That's the kind of evidence they hang men by."

"Yes," Harry answered, "they've hung men for less than that, before this, but that is no reason why they should continue to do so."

"Well, I can't stand here and jabber all night. You'll have to explain at headquarters," said the officer, and then, as an afterthought, he asked his most important question. "Is Rivers dead?"

"He is," Harry replied, "and as near as I could learn, he died immediately after supper; or, rather, between the time he left the table——"

"Six-thirty," said the clerk.

"And the time I arrived in this room, which was seven-thirty," Harry concluded.

He was in no haste to disclose his identity, believing that it might impede the progress of his case.

"Well, come along," said the officer, as he made a move as if to grasp Harry by the arm.

"One moment, Mr. Officer," said Harry. "You are probably either a new man on the force, or else so old that you have become careless of your duties. The first thing that you should do under the present circumstances is to look for evidence. Don't jump at hasty conclusions. Merely because you find me here with blood upon my hand, is no proof that I have committed the crime."

"But I saw you!" the stranger insisted.

"You say that again," said Harry, "and the officer will have cause to arrest me for aggravated assault!"

"What do you mean?" the stranger demanded, brave because he felt that he had plenty of help at hand in the persons of the clerk and the officer.

"Mean? Why just what I say. If you dare to repeat that lying accusation I'll knock you flat!"

"Arrest him, officer!" said the stranger, half frightened.

"You come with me!" the officer commanded, as he took hold of Harry none too gently.

But Harry was quick to turn the tables. He slipped his card into the policeman's hand and motioned him to silence. In a moment, the officer respectfully saluted and released Young Broadbrim, much to the surprise of the stranger and the clerk.

"What's this mean?" asked the stranger in awe.

"It means that we're going to hold a little post-mortem examination at once. You are the first witness. What is your name?" The authoritative tone of Young Broadbrim cowed the stranger, who, finding himself at an unexpected disadvantage, became like plastic clay in Harry's hands.

"My name is Henbury, Frank Henbury."

"Your occupation?" Harry continued.

"I'm marked on the tax list as 'gentleman.'"

"A tax list," said Harry, wisely, "is the funniest comedy ever written. What do you mean by gentleman?"

"I mean that I don't work for a living," was the sul-  
len response.

"You mean that you haven't any visible means of support? Well, what are your invisible means of existence?"

"I haven't any."

"You, eh, gamble, I suppose?"

"I play cards sometimes."

"And depend on them for your bread and butter?"

"Partly."

"And that's your definition of a gentleman, is it?"

"Officer, do I have to answer these damn-fool questions?" Henbury demanded.

"Either here or at headquarters, so you may as well do it here," was the policeman's response.

Henbury scowled.

"I think I ought to know who I'm talking to," he said.

"You are talking to the man you accused of murder," Harry answered. "Are you aware that you have charged me with the most serious crime known to man? You must have had some reason for your accusation. What was it?"

"Well, if I've got to tell the truth, I will," Henbury said, doggedly. "A month ago, Gus came to me and said he was afraid they were after him."

"Who was after him?"

"I thought he meant the police at first, but I found out afterwards that it wasn't the police, but somebody else, and I don't know now who they were. But, anyway, he rents twenty-one over in the other house for me and pays me to sit there every time he was in his own room, for I could look down and see all that was going on. He always had his shades up." For a reason that Harry could not then understand, Henbury began to address his remarks to the officer from this point on. "I used to follow him in the street when he went out, and I haven't been out of his sight for a month.

"I've seen a good many suspicious things occur in this room, but he always came to me afterward and asked me to keep them quiet, and not to do anything, unless his life was in danger.

"So far as I could see, his life was not really in danger until to-night. Two women came in just after supper. They came in separately. One stayed ten minutes while the other was here half an hour. But between the time the first came in and the time of the second, this fellow called," said Henbury, indicating Harry with a motion of his thumb. "They had a quarrel. He, this fellow, ran out on the fire escape, and just as I started to leave the window to come down and help Rivers, a woman came. When I got to the room she was gone."

"Why didn't you report the matter at once?" Harry asked.

"I was scared, and I thought I'd just go back to my room and watch what happened. As soon as I got here I saw that Rivers had been shot, and by feeling

for his heart I knew he was dead. The young fellow shot him," Henbury concluded.

There were several points about the story which Henbury had told which aroused Young Broadbrim's suspicion. If his story were true, it is quite evident that a young man, who looked somewhat like Harry, had been the cause of the murder, or suicide, whichever it had been. Harry determined to question the man further.

"Was Rivers married?" he asked.

"Not to my knowledge. He knew a lot of ladies, but I don't think he was ever married."

"Did you recognize either of the two ladies who called here this evening?"

"The first one I knew by sight. She boards here."

"Know her name?"

"Yes, she's an actress, Maizie Remington."

At the sound of the name Harry started, for he believed that in the actress he had found the owner of the bloody handkerchief. He turned to the clerk:

"Is Miss Remington stopping here?"

"Yes, she has number eight, that's next to this."

"What time did she go out?"

"About seven-fifteen; she's playing at the Casino this week."

"Have you ever noticed that she and Rivers were friendly?"

"Yes, they seemed to have known each other before she came here. She arrived last night, Sunday, and she and Rivers have been eating at the same table ever since."

"You say," Harry asked, as he turned to Henbury again, "that Mr. Rivers had another visitor here this evening: what was she like?"

"I did wait to see much of her. She came in just as you got out of the window."

"You still persist that I committed this crime, eh?"

"If it wasn't you it must have been your ghost."

"One moment. You say you left your room just as I was leaving by way of the fire escape and just as a woman was entering this room?"

"Yes."

"Then how did it happen that I saw you at your

window just before you came in here with the officer and clerk?"

This proved a poser for Henbury, and he hesitated some time before answering. Finally, shifting his attitude slightly, he said:

"You couldn't have seen me at the window."

"That will do for the present. Officer, you will kindly place Mr. Henbury under arrest. We may need his surprising information upon the witness stand."

"You don't mean to lock me up, do you?" Henbury asked, in genuine amazement.

"Why shouldn't I?"

"What have I done?"

"My accusations are not quite so hasty as yours, Mr. Henbury, and as yet I have made no charge against you. I merely wish you to be held as a witness against me. H'm," was Harry's sarcasm.

The officer and Henbury started for the door.

"Report the matter to the coroner at once, and request that this be kept from the reporters for the present," said Harry, as the officer saluted and started down the stairway with his prisoner.

"May I ask your name?" Harry went on, as he faced the clerk.

"Tom Brewer."

"Were you acquainted with the man whom the officer has just arrested?"

"Only by sight. He was with Rivers a great deal."

"Do you know anything about this Miss Remington, the actress?"

"Nothing, except that she is the star of the 'Run-away Boy' Company, which is playing this week at the Casino. She came here Sunday night and registered, and I assigned her to number eight. I have seen her and Rivers together a number of times since then. He seemed very fond of her."

"Did he ever mention her name to you before she came here?"

"Not that I recall. By the way, that's a picture of her there on the bureau."

Harry went over and picked it up

"H'm," he said. "She's very light complexioned. isn't she?"

"Oh, yes, she's a blond."

"A blond!" Harry almost gasped, as he thought of the strand of hair he had found in the dead man's hand.

"Yes," said the clerk, quietly.

"Very well. Just keep this room locked until the coroner calls for the body. Keep the matter as quiet as possible. I may call on you later for further information. For the present I think I will take in a show. Good-night."

And Harry went out, after seeing that the door of number seven was locked.

His destination was the Casino Theater, where he intended seeing the performance of a "Runaway Boy."

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE CAPTOR CAPTURED.

An unexpected surprise awaited Young Broadbrim at the theater. He had sat patiently through the last half of the first act of the "Runaway Boy," and Miss Remington had not appeared.

Her name was featured upon the program in the star part, but the woman who played the part was not the original of the photograph which he had seen upon the bureau in room seven. But this photograph had "Marie Remington" written across it in a plain, bold hand.

When the curtain had fallen upon the act, he inquired of an usher:

"Is that Miss Remington who is playing the star rôle to-night?"

"No," came the reply. "Miss Remington reported, but left at once for her hotel. She is quite ill, I understand. The woman in the part to-night is her understudy."

Harry waited for no more, but hastened back at once to the Harrison House. There was something very suspicious in the sudden illness of this woman who had, but an hour before, taken supper with Gus Rivers. Harry determined to learn the cause of it.

As Harry again approached the register desk of the hotel, he found the clerk in conversation with a well-

dressed man of middle age. He held back a moment, as he caught the drift of their conversation, and concealed himself around the corner of the glass partition, which ran upon the counter.

"You don't mean to tell me Gus is dead?" said the man, pausing as he was about to light a cigar.

"Died to-night about seven," Brewer, the clerk, answered.

"But what was it, heart failure?"

"I guess so."

"When will they bury him?"

"About Wednesday, I suppose," said the clerk, rather indifferently, and Harry congratulated himself that the clerk was proving a pleasing disappointment to him; he was a man who could keep a secret.

The well-dressed man lit his cigar just as the match was about to burn out and walked away.

"Who was he?" Harry asked, as he came from his hiding.

The clerk looked up in surprise at first at the unexpected question from an unexpected source.

"Oh, I thought you went to the show! He is a sort of politician in this ward. His name is Wogan. He has been in to see Rivers several times lately, and just dropped in by chance to-night. By the way, you might put me next—who are you?"

Harry passed a card across the counter. The clerk's face lighted up with a happy smile, and, as he extended his hand, he said: "You don't mean that you are the Wilson that is called Young Broadbrim?" Harry nodded. "The dickens you are! Why, I know your side partner, Dandy Dick! He used to shine shoes around the Chelton Hotel in New York, when I was clerking over there. Well, say, I'm glad to know you. You don't think this thing is murder, do you?"

"I haven't had much chance to think," said Harry, evasively.

"Well, you can count on me for all I'm worth. I've had a fancy for the detective business ever since I was a kid."

But Harry, while glad to know that he had found a friend in the clerk, had no time to hear his idle talk.

"Has Miss Remington returned since I went out?" he asked.

"Say, you don't think she's mixed up in this, do you?"

"Oh, no," Harry said, indifferently. "She knew Mr. Rivers, and I want some information about him."

"Go right up to number eight and knock on her door. She came in a half hour ago. I think she's sick, although she hasn't sent for a doctor so far as I know."

Harry thanked him, and hurriedly went up the stairway to room number eight. He paused outside the door for a moment, and heard a movement in the room. The light in there was lit. He knocked upon the door and waited in vain for a reply. The movement inside the room had suddenly ceased. He knocked again.

"Who's there?" came a woman's voice from within the room.

"I'm looking for Miss Mazie Remington; is this her room?"

"Yes, but she's not in. You'll find her at the theater."

"No, I've been there and was told that she was here," Harry said.

"She must be there. Try again."

Harry was puzzled. He wanted to see the woman upon the other side of the door. And yet he would not dare open the door himself. A sudden thought came to him.

"Will she be back here to-night?" he asked.

"I suppose so—after the show."

"I can't wait till then. Kindly give her this."

"What is it?"

"A package."

"Leave it down with the clerk."

"I was instructed not to leave it at the desk. It is valuable."

"Better see her and give it to her in person," the woman persisted, but Harry was not to be put off.

"I have to go to New York on the next train, and I can't waste any more time over it," he said.

"Don't you know what it is?"

"No."

"Who are you, a messenger boy?"

"Yes."

The woman did not reply for a time, but at last she said, "I can't be seen just now."

"All right, I'll just leave it here by the door."

Harry walked away heavily, but tiptoed back to his former position beside the door, immediately.

He heard her coming toward the door, and he moved so that she would not see him when the door was first opened.

As she opened the door Harry walked past although he had just come up the stairway. He caught a glimpse of a woman fully dressed. She was the exact counterpart of the photograph of Mazie Remington on Gus Rivers' bureau, except that her hair was black.

Was she a sister?

If so, why had she not opened her door when he had knocked? She was fully dressed—even to a hat.

He went down and interviewed the clerk once more and learned that so far as Brewer knew, Miss Remington had no sister. She occupied room number eight alone.

Harry lit another cigar and walked out to the front door—to ask himself a few questions.

Try as he would, he could not but connect the actress with the crime. An innocent person would have given themselves up to the authorities, while this woman, if Henbury's story was to be believed, had been one of two to enter Rivers' room immediately before and after the tragedy.

If Miss Remington was the last, then the handkerchief, stained with blood, which Harry had in his pocket, was probably hers. If she had not shot Rivers, she had at least tried to stop the flow of blood, and, leaving room seven by way of the fire escape, she had entered the window of room number eight.

Again, why should this actress, playing, as she did, a star part in a theatrical company, stop at such a cheap hotel?

Surely her salary was sufficient to permit her to have better quarters than the Harrison House afforded!

It all looked strange, and, upon the face of it, was certainly incriminating.

But who was the woman in room number eight? Should he arrest her at once? He decided not to, for he believed that he could secure more evidence by watching her actions. He concluded to remain about the hotel for the rest of the night, and not to lose sight of the occupant of room number eight at any cost.

As to the Margaret Rivers, and Morris Rivers, whose names he had found upon the stubs of Rivers' check book, he saw no way of gleaming information about them until the next morning, when he intended finding their address, if possible, from the bank. He had scanned the city directory on his way to the theater, earlier in the evening, but to no avail.

As he stood at the door a patrol wagon drove up, and the sergeant and patrolmen at once prepared their stretcher.

Harry preceded them up the stairway to the room where Rivers' body lay. There, to his surprise, he found two city detectives. He thought it odd that the clerk had made no mention of their arrival, but in the occupation of the moment, he dismissed the matter temporarily from his mind.

Harry introduced himself and in turn was introduced to the two detectives.

At first they were inclined to be rather reticent about their investigation, but they finally admitted that Rivers' death was a case of suicide pure and simple. Harry smiled to himself, but said nothing.

The appearance of the room amused him as much as anything, for the two detectives had turned the contents of the trunk and bureau drawers out upon the floor, and room number seven looked very much as though a cyclone had struck it.

One of the detectives referred to the imprint of a bloody hand upon the window sill to prove that Rivers, in his last moment, had stood there for a breath of air.

"The wagon's at the door," said Harry, with a face as guileless as a babe.

As he spoke, the men with the stretcher arrived at the room door, followed by the clerk.

The body of Gus Rivers was lifted none too tenderly upon the police stretcher and covered with a blanket,

and the two men from the wagon started slowly down the stairway with it.

The two or three guests who had heard of the tragedy stood at the foot of the stairway as the body was carried down. One of them, an old actor, out of work, reverently removed his hat as the little silent procession passed him on its way to the street.

A crowd of the curious stood upon the sidewalk and looked on in awe, until the wagon drove away, bearing all that was left of Gus Rivers to the coroner's marble slab.

The two detectives remained upon the step beside Harry. One of them asked:

"Did you have that fellow, Henbury, pulled?"

"Yes."

"What for?"

"He seemed to know too much," Harry replied.

"Did he see it?"

"He says he did."

"Humph," said the questioner, rather disdainfully. "The coroner may use him; we can't."

"Whatever you do, don't let him get away," Harry suggested.

"Get away? What's he want to get away for? He's out, of course. Wogan bailed him five minutes after he got into a cell."

"Wogan?" Harry repeated.

"Certainly. He's a ward heeler for Wogan."

"Oh. Wogan's security good?"

"Cert," said the wise detective, who, perhaps, was not so wise as he thought. He and his fellow worker left Young Broadbrim standing upon the steps, and went away without another word.

"I wish them luck," said Harry to himself, as he watched them disappearing around a nearby corner.

He was just about to re-enter the hotel when a cab drove up and stopped at the curb. The cabman got down from his box and quickly ran up the steps and passed Harry.

"The lady in room number eight is going away," Harry muttered—but he was mistaken, for just then the cabman came back along the hallway, followed by the clerk.

"Are you Mr. Wilson?" asked the cabman.

"Yes. Why?"

"You are wanted at police headquarters at once," the cabman answered.

"I just got a 'phone message to that effect," the clerk assured Harry, as he saw him hesitate.

In a whisper he said to the clerk: "Keep your eyes on Miss Remington, even if you lose your position by it. I'll pay you well for your trouble."

And as the cabman mounted the box, Harry opened the door of the cab and stepped inside.

His hands were suddenly grasped by another occupant of the cab, and a pair of handcuffs were clasped about his wrists.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE BRINK OF THE GRAVE.

As Harry was thrust back into the seat of the cab, one of his captors exultantly exclaimed:

"You may be a pretty smart kid, but you're up against the wrong game!"

The door of the carriage was suddenly closed; the shades were drawn down, and the interior of the vehicle was so dark that Harry could not distinguish the features of his captors.

But the voice he had heard was strangely familiar to him. Where had he heard it before?

"May I ask the meaning of this?" he said.

"You'll find out before we get through with you," the first speaker replied, and the other occupant of the cab cautioned him:

"Don't lose your head!"

There was something familiar in the second man's voice. Harry searched his memory in vain, trying to recall where he had heard these voices before.

Harry soon discovered that the police headquarters was not the destination of his captors. It was not a surprise to him, for, from the time he had entered the cab, he concluded that he was in the hands of the man or men who were in some way connected with Gus Rivers' death.

How far the cab had gone he had no means of know-

ing, but it finally stopped. One man held Harry's hands in a viselike grip, while the other tied a bandage across his eyes.

The door of the cab was finally opened, and Harry was led out upon the sidewalk and into a building and up a flight of uncarpeted stairs. When they had led him into a room at the top of the stairway the door was closed behind them.

One of the men said: "You'll be safer here."

"Thank you," said Harry, sarcastically.

"None o' your back talk," the man replied, as he struck Young Broadbrim across the face with his open hand.

"Quit that," the other man commanded.

"Well, I owe him more than that, and it's coming to him before I gets through with him."

Harry's memory suddenly came to his rescue, and he said:

"Very well, Mr. Henbury."

The effect upon his captors was electrical.

"I told you," said the man whose voice Harry had not yet placed. "Light the gas."

Henbury obeyed, and as he let go his hold upon Harry's wrist, Young Broadbrim raised his manacled hands and deftly removed the bandage from his eyes. He was dumfounded to find that his other captor was Wogan, the politician, whom he had seen talking to the clerk at the Harrison House.

"I might suggest," said Harry, calmly, as he removed the cigar from his mouth with his two hands, "that in making a capture of this kind it is always safer to handcuff the prisoner's hands behind him."

For a moment, both Wogan and Henbury were so taken back that their speech left them. But at last Wogan said:

"I fear you misunderstand our motives. Mr. Henbury has informed me that he witnessed the crime at the hotel, and that you were the principal factor in it."

"It was very kind of Mr. Henbury, to say the least," Harry answered. "And I suppose that you, fearing I would escape, have made me your prisoner?"

"Exactly," said Wogan, rubbing his hands together, and smiling pleasantly.

"Mr. Henbury and I have considerable influence with the officials here, and will be credited for this capture."

"I see," Harry said, but he did not see what Wogan intended that he should. Instead he saw what he believed to be a part of a conspiracy. That Wogan was not telling the truth, he felt positive. For if they had cared to have had him arrested, they had gone about his capture in a most irregular and unnecessary manner.

"I wonder that you went to so much trouble," Harry went on. "Why didn't you hand me over to the police?"

"You bluffed one cop and you might bluff a few more," said Henbury; "we ain't taking no chances on that. Gus was a good friend of ours, and we are here to see that his death is avenged."

"What do you mean by that!" Harry demanded, for there was something in Henbury's tone that made him suspicious.

"When the police fail to do their duty, it's about time somebody else took a hand," was Henbury's reply.

Wogan frowned upon him; an intimation that he had said too much, but Henbury was not to be so easily silenced.

"The way we deal with fresh kids like you, who shoot men down in cold blood, is to——"

"Shut your loud face!" Wogan cried.

"I won't shut up for you," said Henbury, doggedly.

"Come in the other room, I want to see you," Wogan said. "Lock this door and see that the window is fastened."

"We'll put the anklets on this kid first and follow his kind suggestion about the handcuffs."

Harry was compelled to helplessly submit. A pair of anklets, which Henbury carried in his coat pocket, were locked to his feet, and he was forced to lie face downward upon the floor while his captors handcuffed his hands behind him.

They left him lying upon the floor and went into the adjoining room, closing the door behind them.

They held a whispered conversation, and Harry,

determined to hear it, rolled over and over upon the floor until his ear was close to the sill of the door between the rooms.

Henbury was saying: "I tell you it is! I know his face. I've seen it in the papers too often, and I'll bet you even money that the old Quaker is somewhere behind him."

"Well, then we've made a mess of it," said Wogan, in disgust. "You should have jumped your bail, and I should have skipped out. But even now, I don't see how they can fasten anything on us. I never put a thing on paper and neither did you. No one knows the truth. The only thing against us is this abduction. It's a bad mess, but it's never too late to mend. We had better leave the kid just where he is and take the next train for the West."

"Nix," Henbury answered. "The kid has made me sore, and I'm going to punch the stuffing out of him before I get through."

"Now don't be an ass. Let the kid be. We'll lock him in the room and let him starve to death."

"If we skip now, what's going to become of Rivers' money?" asked Henbury.

"The woman will get it all, and we can easily get it away from her. I don't like the idea of having them find the kid's body in this house. If they do happen to land us at any time, it would be a murder charge," said Wogan. "We'd better clean the thing up right."

"Drop him in the river?"

"No, they'd find the body sooner or later."

"Not if we load it down."

"It's likely to come up before the fish have finished with it," Wogan went on.

"I've got it!" exclaimed Henbury. "We'll turn the gas on in every room in the house, leaving only this jet here lighted. The place will fill up—and bang! What's left of him after that, the fire will wipe out."

"Sounds big," was Wogan's comment, as though they were discussing an everyday scheme of their lives, instead of the annihilation of a living body.

"It is big! They couldn't find a trace, then," Henbury continued, excitedly, at the thought of the horrible project.

They were silent for a time, and then Wogan, who was undoubtedly the wisest of the two, said: "Yes, they could. They would know who rented the house. My name is on the lease."

"What for?"

"I intended lodging some 'repeaters' here."

"What of that; nobody knows that we are here tonight," Henbury said.

"You forget the cabman."

"He don't know me."

"He knows me. I've used him before, and he knows my name. He always calls me Mr. Wogan."

Again they were thoughtful.

"Ah!" Henbury exclaimed, "I have it. We'll blow the house up now, and have Big Mike knock the cabby on the head before the night is over."

"Where's Mike now?"

"He went up to interview the widow again. If we can coax her to Cleveland after she gets the money, we'll finish up the job there, and take another trip."

"I thought you said the widow came to see him tonight. Didn't you say so?" asked Wogan.

"So she did, just before the thing happened, but he wouldn't dare give our snap away, for I was out on the fire escape, and he knew it. He gave her the check Mike promised her, and said a few soft things to her, and she went away happy. Mike followed her."

"Where are we to meet him?"

"At the Harrison by ten o'clock."

"Well, we'd better finish up here and get out as soon as possible. We've got to see Mike before we leave town. What's the move?"

"You go in and watch the kid, while I go round the house and turn on the gas," said Henbury.

"All right. Don't be long," said Wogan, as he turned and was about to open the door of the room in which Harry lay.

But Henbury called him back for a moment, and it gave Harry an opportunity of returning to his former position; the position in which his captors had left him.

Young Broadbrim's head was in a whirl.

The events of the night had crowded upon one an-

other so rapidly that he scarcely knew what to make of them.

That these two men, his captors, were deeply concerned in the death of Gus Rivers, he did not for a second doubt. Which one, if either, had committed the deed, he did not know, but he had heard sufficient of their conversation to convict them as accessories.

He wondered to whom they had referred as "the woman" in the earlier portion of their talk. Could they have meant the actress, Miss Remington? Or, was the "woman" and the widow, whom they mentioned toward the end of their dialogue, one and the same?

And who was this widow? Could they mean Margaret Rivers? And was she the wife of the dead man? One thing was certain, their conversation had not seemed to point to her implication in the crime. Perhaps she was an unwitting tool of these men, for they had referred to a Mike, who went to see her, and Mike was one of them.

Harry could not help but admit to himself that this was without doubt the most complicated case he had ever yet encountered. But complications served to make him more determined.

In the meantime he heard Henbury say: "Well, go on in. There are some matches on the mantelpiece. I don't know this joint well enough to stumble around in the dark."

"Well, I know it, so I guess I'd better go with you. Here are some matches," said Wogan.

Harry heard them leave the next room by another door. They were not gone five minutes—but the odor of escaping gas had already begun to penetrate the house.

When the door to the room in which Harry lay was opened, Wogan entered, followed by his confederate.

They stopped just inside the door.

Sitting up against the wall was Young Broadbrim, and in his manacled hands he held a revolver.

Aghast, the two men looked into its threatening barrel.

"Gentlemen," said Harry, "I thank you for adapting my suggestion about the handcuffs. Always handcuff your prisoner from behind. But I neglected to men-

tion one of the most important rules to be found in the 'Code for Captives,' which was written by my chief. It reads: 'Disarm your man.' "

Henbury made a movement toward him.

"Be calm," Harry exclaimed, quickly. "This trigger is rather nervous to-night, and I'm holding the gun in a very uncomfortable position. And again, it is very impolite to interrupt a gentleman when he is speaking. I was about to say that by placing my hands behind me, you also placed them too near to my hip pocket."

"Damn you!" exclaimed Henbury, in rage.

"Be calm," was Harry's cool injunction. "Sit down there on the floor. I understand that we are to take a hasty trip to the skies, as soon as the gas gets in its work. Dying alone is not at all pleasant, especially in such an odor as this."

The fumes of the escaping gas were becoming stronger with each moment, and not one of these three knew how soon the shock would come that would send them into eternity.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE CITY DETECTIVE.

When Harry supposed that the city detectives, whom he met in room seven at the Harrison House, had credited the suicide theory, he was much mistaken.

True to their craft, they kept their deductions to themselves. Being city detectives, they did not intend to permit an outsider, especially a New York man, to get ahead of them.

For this reason they had lied to Young Broadbrim, of whose fame they were quite naturally envious.

When they left him upon the steps of the hotel, they had done so purposely to throw him off the track.

They had turned the corner of Franklin Street, and crossing it, they had deviated until they had arrived at the corner of a small street running into Race, from which they could watch him.

When Harry entered the cab and was driven away, they congratulated themselves that they had so easily thrown him off the scent.

Their names were Ballagher and Gond—two of the cleverest men on the force.

"The kid's off on a booze," Gond said, as he watched the cab being driven rapidly away.

"Does he drink?" asked Ballagher.

"Like a fish," said the other. "That's the reason they won't have him on the force in New York. They can't depend on him."

"He's too young for the business, anyway," Ballagher went on. "If some of those Philadelphia thugs ever get up against him he'll see his finish in short order. So he's a lush, eh?"

"Fierce. He's stuck on himself, and thinks every woman he sees is in love with him. I guess some of the city dames have roped him in for a night's sport."

"Let's go over to the Harrison," Gond suggested.

And the two started for the hotel, quite satisfied that they had beaten Harry at the offstart and had disposed of his character in the bargain.

The detectives had almost reached the steps of the hotel when one of them paused and caught the other's arm in a detaining grasp.

"Look," he said—it was Gond who spoke—"isn't that Mike Edwards going into the Harrison?"

Ballagher looked in the direction of the hotel and said, "Does resemble him, doesn't it?"

"I sent him up for six months, and I guess he just got out."

"No," said Ballagher. "He got off ahead of time for good behavior. He's been out for six weeks, at least."

"What's he been at since?"

"Give it up. I've been too busy to watch him."

"Well, you could get him a hundred years of it, and if he lived through it, he would come out and work his hands off to get a new sentence. I think you had better keep an eye on him, and let me make a further search of Rivers' room."

"All right," said Ballagher, and they went up the steps and into the hotel.

They found Mike Edwards at the desk talking to the clerk, and as he caught sight of them, he turned a shade paler.

"What's doing, Mike?" asked Gond.

"Nothin'," Mike answered, trying to appear easy. "I was jes' lookin' fer a partic'lar friend o' mine."

"Who?"

"Mr. Henbury."

"Did you find him?"

"No, he's went out."

"What are you doing for a living now?"

"I ain't caught a steady job at me trade yet, so I been mixin' up in politics."

"In this ward?"

"Yah. The tenth is good enough for me."

"Does it pay?"

"Oh, pretty well. Of course, it's quiet now, but around election time we get busy, all right."

"You heard that Rivers is dead, I suppose?" asked Gond.

Mike's jaw twitched suddenly, and he answered slowly, "No—when did he die?"

"To-night."

"Is that so?"

"Yes, did you know him?"

"Only by sight and from what Henbury told me of him. He's a big man in the theatrical business, ain't he?"

"I think so," answered Gond, thoughtfully.

"I suppose Mr. Henbury will be back to-night," Mike said to the clerk, as the detective walked away.

"I suppose so," answered Brewer.

"If you don't mind, I'll wait here for him," said Mike, as he sat down opposite the desk.

Gond left the two in the reception room and went up the stairway to join his comrade in room number seven.

"Say," Ballagher began, as Gond entered, closing the door after him. "I've made a discovery. This bloody hand mark on the window sill was made by a woman, and that woman occupies room number eight."

"How did you find that out?"

"I made up my mind that the murderer escaped by the window, but the bloody hand mark is too small to have been made by Rivers, himself."

"Well?"

"So I climbed out on the fire escape and looked for further traces of the murderer's flight."

"I see."

"I had almost given it up, when upon returning I saw an imprint upon the shutter of room eight. It was not so bloody as this one here, and was, therefore, more distinct. It was a woman's without a shadow of doubt, and she had entered room eight."

"Cinch!" Gond exclaimed.

"That's what I think. I suppose you know who the woman is?"

"Not the actress?"

"Yep."

"Get out!"

"She's had the room since Sunday, I understand, and is alone."

"That ought to settle it then," said Gond. "I suppose she's at the theater now."

"No, I think she's in the room. I noticed that the gas is lit in there."

"Let's go in."

They left room seven and knocked at the door of room eight. No response came to their summons. They knocked again. And then Gond said, after trying the knob:

"It's locked."

"Anybody in there?" Ballagher asked. "If there is, open, or we'll break in!"

"Go down and get the house key," Gond whispered, and soon Ballagher had returned and opened the door of room eight.

It was empty.

"The bird has flown!" exclaimed Gond, in surprise. "She'll be back. There's her trunk, and she's left a lot of stuff here in the bureau."

"Yes, and she wouldn't dare break her contract with the 'Runaway Boy' Company. She'll be back all right. We'll just hang around the house until the show is over."

"By George, here's evidence in plenty," Gond exclaimed, as he picked up a towel from a corner and found it stained with blood.

"I guess I had better go around and watch the stage door of the Casino, and you keep guard here," Ballagher said.

"Yes, we can't afford to let her get away," and they went down the stairway together.

"Did you find her in?" asked the clerk of them.

"No."

"That's odd. She's not playing to-night. She came back about eight o'clock, got her key, said she was sick, and went up to her room. She has not gone out since, for I've been watching the stairway."

"Any other women in the house go out?"

Brewer was thoughtful, and then he answered: "Only one since Miss Remington came in."

"Sure it was not the actress?" Gond continued.

"Certain. Miss Remington is a decided blonde. The woman who went out was a brunette."

"Well, who was she?"

"I imagine she was a visitor. I did not notice her coming in, but she might have entered while I was at supper."

During this conversation between the detectives and the clerk, two men were approaching the Harrison House.

They were Wogan and Henbury.

Wogan said: "You are sure you closed the door after you?"

"You bet your life I did. I slammed it in his face," Henbury answered, revengefully.

"There is no possible way for him to escape?"

"Not with his hands behind him. The old house is locked up as tight as a jail cell."

"I had every jet turned on full."

"And, beside, the knock in the head that you gave him ought to hold him down until the gas could get in its work."

"Hello," said Wogan, "here come the engines now. The explosion has happened!"

"Well, I don't wish the fire boys any bad luck, but I hope they can't get that fire out until his body is roasted to a finish."

"Get a move on. We haven't any time to lose. We've got to put Mike to work at once, if he's here. The cabby must go."

They hurriedly entered the hotel, and as they approached the desk, they passed friendly greetings with the two detectives and then motioned to Mike to follow them.

They went up the stairway to room twenty-one,

which Henbury had rented, and here they held a whispered consultation.

"Some election move on foot?" asked Gond of the clerk.

"If there is, they are keeping it rather quiet," Brewer answered.

"They walked away from the desk and out of Brewer's hearing.

Ballagher said: "What did the kid lock Henbury up for?"

"As a witness. Henbury claims that he saw the kid commit the crime, but, of course, he's wrong in that. He also says that Rivers had two women visitors during the evening. One before and one after the shooting. He says he thinks the first one was Rivers' wife, with whom he did not live, and the second one was the actress."

"It's the actress we want. Everything points against her. Did Henbury know where the wife lived?"

"No."

"I guess she'll turn up at the inquest."

"Well, I'll go around to the show shop," Ballagher concluded, as he arose.

"I'll stay here."

And so the two city men, like idle fishermen, waited for the fish to come into their net—while the fish was on its way to deeper and safer waters.

## CHAPTER VII.

### TRICKED IN THE TRAP.

"You are not going to die here with us, are you?" Henbury asked, pitifully, as he fully realized the terrible ordeal that faced the trio in the house Wogan had rented.

"I don't see the use of it," Harry answered. "Suppose you and your friend, Wogan, turn all your pockets inside out and then we will discuss the situation further."

The two men were so frightened by now that their only thought was for the safety of their lives. Without a moment's hesitation they began to hastily empty out their pockets upon the floor. As they removed their revolvers, Harry sat upon them.

"Now," said Harry, when their pockets were at last emptied. "Take that key and unlock those anklets."

Henbury quickly did so.

"Now, Wogan, go downstairs and turn the gas off in every room in the house. Henbury and I will meet you at the front door."

Wogan ran out of the room as quickly as his legs would carry him, but Young Broadbrim was still at a disadvantage. While he had saved his life and theirs, his hands were still manacled, and he feared to have Henbury unlock the handcuffs. So he ordered Henbury to go down to the front door—and he followed close at his heels.

Just as they arrived at the front door, they heard a door slammed shut in the back part of the house.

"He's gone!" Henbury gasped. "He's given us the slip!"

"I had to sacrifice one of you," said Harry. "Wogan won't get many miles away from the city. And, in the meantime, open the door."

Henbury's hand was raised to turn the Yale lock when without warning a hammer struck Young Broadbrim upon the back of the head. It had been thrown from the rear end of the hall. Wogan had worked an old ruse upon him.

As he fell to the floor, he realized that Henbury had escaped under his very nose—the front door was slammed in his face.

He fell back to the floor, unconscious.

How long he lay there he could not tell, but when he had at last recovered his senses, the odor of escaping gas was stronger than ever before.

Wogan had escaped by the rear, but before he had gone, he had lighted the gas jet in the hallway, and had left the others just as they had been—turned on, unlighted.

Harry knew that it was but a matter of minutes between himself and a horrible death.

Soon the gas must fill the house—and an explosion must follow.

He tried to reach the lock upon the door, but his hands, fastened behind his back, could not be raised much beyond his waist line. In terror he ran about the house, trying the doors and windows—but all in vain.

Finally he ran into the cellar.

The air was more pure there than in any portion of the house, for the fumes of gas went up.

He wondered what effect the explosion would have upon the house. Would it simply blow the roof into the sky, or would it shatter the house to bits? And would the bursting walls let the flooring down into the cellar?

This latter seemed the more probable. There would be a crash, and tons of plaster, brick and wood must come upon his head.

Harry was a young man of resources and seldom did he permit anything to balk him, but the present situation seemed to have no outlet.

In the darkness he felt along the damp cellar walls, hoping against hope that he might find some opening, in which he could be protected when the crash came. But the walls seemed flat and bare.

By now the fumes of the gas were penetrating into the cellar, and he knew by that the house must be pretty well filled with it. Why did not the crash come to relieve him of his awful suspense? If he must die such death as this, why, then, the sooner it was over, the better.

The strain upon his mind was great.

His head pained him terribly from the effects of the blow that had fallen upon it, and between this pain and the thought of the impending disaster, his reason seemed to desert him.

His fancy pictured to him the most horrible pictures. He could see the house being shattered into a million fragments; he could see his body, torn limb from limb; he could see the fire, fed by the wood and gas, consuming his terrible sepulcher like some hunger-mad monster!

What if the explosion did not harm his body? What if some falling rafter should pin him on the ground, and there, with every faculty clear, he would be slowly roasted to death in the ensuing fire!

Fight as he would, he could not rid himself of these distorted visions.

He wondered where this house could be? Surely it was somewhere within the city limits, for the cab had not gone more than a mile, at most, from the vicinity of the Harrison House.

And yet, if this were a city house, why did he not hear the sounds of passing cars? Why did he not hear pedestrians passing upon the flagstone or brick pavement?

Perhaps the house was in some small street, seldom frequented by night? If that were so, his plight were indeed more hopeless than ever.

But were there not houses upon either side of it? Were there not houses in which some one lived? If not, were there not factory buildings in which a night watchman was employed? Certainly if there were a living soul within the neighborhood, they must smell this horrible odor, that was fast robbing him of consciousness.

He began to shout loudly for help.

But his voice echoed back to him from the cellar walls, to taunt him in his anguish.

An idea came to him! His revolver! He would fire that to attract attention!

But, no, the gas which by now seemed to fill the upper part of the cellar might become ignited by the shot.

He heard a whistle, somewhere outside.

Again it sounded, nearer.

Another whistle, deeper in tone and farther away, answered it. And he knew that he was somewhere near the river front of the city, for the ferryboats were signaling their course to one another.

A heavy wagon approached and rumbled past.

The sound of water splashing against the docks fell upon his ear.

But why was there no one passing? He knew that the river front after six o'clock in the evening was almost deserted. But almost every building had its own watchman, and the policeman assigned to that beat must sooner or later pass the house.

But how soon would that be? It had seemed hours to the young detective, now.

Would succor come in time to save him?

He ran madly up the stairway and along the hall. Putting his back against the front door he kicked loudly first with one heel and then the other. He shouted at the top of his voice again. But only the echoes, ringing through the old house, answered him in mockery.

For fully two minutes he stood there at the door, kicking and shouting, in vain. Then the fumes of gas became too much for him, and he sought the cellar again.

He lay down upon the damp ground where the air was still untainted by the gas, and filled his lungs.

He heard the sound of fire bells in the distance.

What did it mean?

Had there been an explosion in the upper part of the building while he was knocking and shouting upon the front door?

It might be so, for the building, so far as he could know, might be five or six stories in height.

The clanging bells came nearer.

Yes, they must be coming to this house.

More bells were heard.

The clatter of the galloping horses became audible; the rumble of the heavy fire machines became distinct.

They were so near now, that they seemed to shake the very foundation of the gas-filled house.

With fresh hope in his heart, Harry sprang to his feet and ran up the stairway to the front door again.

It had not been so many years ago that the sound of the fire bells had been welcomed by him. Often he had heard them from his pillow, and had jumped out of his warm bed upon the coldest winter night, to see the brave fire fighters go past his window.

Then his joy had been in the excitement of it, and no thought had come to him of the destruction of life or property which their passing had signified.

But now, the sound of the bells had a new meaning for him. It was his life that they were coming to save! His life!

Why did they not hurry? Hurry, hurry!

Did they not know that inside this door a man hungered for a breath of God's pure air?

A man was thirsting for a sight of the street! Oh, why did they not hurry? Never before had they come so slowly!

But the minutes passed.

The clang of the bells died away.

Harry's heart sank within his breast.

"My God!" he gasped. "It's not here! It's not here!" And he found his way back into the cellar, to lie there and wait his doom.

As he walked into the dark cellar again, he stumbled over something, and by feeling it, he found it to be a chair from which the back had been broken. He thought it odd that he had not found it before, but, perhaps, he had not crossed that particular portion of the cellar previously.

The chair was two feet high. Could he not, by standing upon it, reach the gas jet which was burning in the upper room and turn it off!

Surely! Even though he could not reach it with his hands, he could at least knock the key with his forehead, until the gas was thus turned off.

He grabbed the chair behind him and went up the stairway as rapidly as his cumbersome burden would permit, only to find that Henbury had taken care to lock the door of the only room in the house in which the gas was lighted.

Although he was disappointed, he returned to the cellar, thankful that the room door was closed. He argued that it would take the escaping gas a long time to penetrate into the room, and thus the final crash would be delayed.

A new thought came to him, and he kicked himself a fool! The gas meter! Why had he not thought that before!

But where was it?

He had felt along the entire space of the cellar walls and had not found it.

He started around once more, and to his delight, he discovered it in a place where, in his previous investigation, he had not gone—directly beneath the stairway. To his dismay he found that it was placed almost at a level with his head.

But he placed his chair beneath it, and, turning round, tried to turn the key with his manacled hands but, alas! they came just far enough below the top of the meter to be useless to him.

His head was beginning to whirl once more, and he knew that he would soon lose consciousness.

In a moment of mad desperation, he turned about upon the chair and caught the key between his teeth.

But, alas! the strongest jaws could not have budged

"Ha!" he cried, in a sudden madness of delight. The lock! The lock of the front door! It's a Yale! The chair is high enough! Yes! Yes!"

And he dashed wildly up the stairway.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE WIDOW.

As Harry stepped out upon the sidewalk, he breathed a sigh of relief—he was free at last!

He looked about him and up at the house he had just left, and learned that he had been imprisoned in an empty warehouse on Delaware Avenue, not far from the foot of Market Street.

Scarcely had he taken ten steps when a terrific explosion occurred, that seemed to shake the very earth beneath him.

The old warehouse was shattered into instant ruin, and within five seconds immense flames burst out of the wreck.

He ran to the corner of Market Street in the hope of finding a policeman there who would turn in the alarm of fire.

Before he reached the corner the street seemed filled with a crowd of running people, who had come out of unexpected places.

Watchmen of the various other houses in the neighborhood ran into the street; passengers, waiting for

the ferryboats, ran out to see what the matter could be; persons seated in nearby restaurants left their tables and sought a place of vantage.

Fortunately, the engines of the fire department were returning from a slight fire two squares away, and they at once turned their attention to the new blaze.

The fire by now was burning fiercely and threatened the nearby properties. Another alarm was turned in, and within six minutes another quota of fire fighters had arrived upon the scene, with a clanging of bells, a clattering of horses' hoofs, and the rumbling of their heavy fire machines.

A patrol wagon, loaded with policemen, arrived, and ropes were soon strung across the street to keep the crowd in check.

But, in all this excitement, no one seemed to notice a young man with his hands manacled behind him.

He stood upon the river side of the street, looking up at the blazing house, thanking his lucky stars that he had escaped in the very nick of time.

Anyone to have seen him might have thought that he was merely holding his hands behind his back.

At the first opportunity he sought the captain of police and explained the case to him.

The captain, who had never met him personally, had, fortunately, seen his photographs in the papers many times, and so, readily recognized him, and accepted his story for truth.

While the key that the captain carried did not unlock the handcuffs that Harry wore, one, carried by a patrolman did, and Harry, pocketing the iron bracelets that had nearly caused his death, started up Market Street.

There was an odor of gas about his clothes that was not only repulsive to him, but brought up constantly the terrible struggle for liberty that he had just undergone.

His wrists still bore the marks of the iron bands that rested in his pockets, but, best of all, with the thought of his suffering came the strong desire for summary justice.

Wogan and Henbury must not escape for the insult they had offered him! If it took the rest of his life to bring them to the bar of justice, it would be but their desserts and his duty.

He passed a cheap restaurant and determined to eat some raw oysters, for his throat was parched.

He sat upon a high stool at the counter and gave his order for half a dozen raw oysters, and, as he waited, he turned over several plans of action within his mind.

In his story, which he had told the captain of police at the fire, he had advised that word be sent out to apprehend Wogan and Henbury on sight.

They must not leave the city at any cost. This, the captain had promised to do at once. He had assured Harry that Wogan, at least, would not escape, for he was very well known as a Tenth Ward politician.

Harry had left the captain at the police telephone box, sending word to his station for the arrest, at sight, of Wogan.

And so, satisfied that he had done all he could in that quarter, Harry had started up Market Street, intending to return to the Harrison House and look for the actress, whom, he was sure, was in some way concerned in the plot.

The restaurant in which Harry found himself had a long oyster bar running along one side of it. Upon the other side a number of small four-seat tables were arranged.

At one of these sat a woman and a small boy.

Harry would not have paid attention to these patrons of the place, had it not been that, beside himself and them, the café was unoccupied.

So, while the oysterman was opening his oysters, Harry glanced in the mirror behind the bar, and looked at the woman and child.

The woman did not attract him so much as the child, although she was such a woman as might attract the ordinary man, for she was rather pretty, if not beautiful; she was neatly, although inexpensively dressed; she had a light and rosy complexion, and a wealth of blond hair.

But the child? There was a striking resemblance in the child's face to some one whom Harry had seen before.

While he was trying to locate the resemblance, his oysters were placed before him, and he began to eat in order not to excite suspicion.

The little boy had just finished eating his oyster stew, when the woman with him, asked:

"Does Morris feel better now?"

"Morris!" Harry echoed, to himself. "Morris!" And then a light dawned upon him! The child resembled its father—Gus Rivers!

This youngster, then, was the boy mentioned in the note he had found in fragments upon the table in Rivers' room, and the woman was probably the wife and mother.

But her hair! Harry recalled the strand of blond hair he had found in the hands of the dead man.

Could this innocent-looking woman have been Gus Rivers at the time of his death? Could she have been the cause of it?

Harry studied her closely.

For a woman who had witnessed a suicide, she was remarkably well possessed, and too well possessed, indeed, to have been the cause of it.

And as for being a murderess? This woman? No, it could not be. For while she may not be the best woman in the world, she was surely not the woman to commit a murder.

Harry had finished his oysters before she had finished eating, and, after paying for his bill, he left the counter, and, going over to her, said:

"Pardon me, but isn't this Mrs. Rivers?"

The woman hesitated at first, but finally admitted that it was.

"Mrs. Margeret Rivers, isn't it?" Harry continued.

"Are you the wife of Mr. Gus Rivers?"

"I am."

"You are aware, I suppose, that he met with an accident this evening?"

"No!" she gasped, so naturally, that Harry quite decided her innocence. "What was it?"

"Mr. Rivers—is—eh—dead."

She looked at him uncertainly for a time, then said: "Dead? Why he was alive at seven o'clock to-night for I was in his room talking to him."

"He died just after your departure."

"Was it heart failure?"

"No. Probably suicide."

"Suicide!" she echoed. "Then it has come at last!"

Harry made bold to introduce himself and say that it would be to her interest to tell him all she knew.

"I only know what he told me to-night. First of all I had better tell you that Gus and I have not lived together for four years. I left him because he was in love with another woman."

"But there is one thing I must give him credit for, and that is, that, for the most part, he allowed me as much money each week for the child."

"While he rarely gave me anything for myself. I was quite satisfied to have Morris receive it. I made a living at dressmaking, until a month ago, when work became scarce and I wrote Gus for money."

"This he promised to give me if I came to see him."

night, which I did. He was more affectionate than has been for a long time. He said he did not expect to live till morning, but as he had often had the gas before, I thought nothing of it.

"I cheered him up as much as I could and left him. I asked that Morris be taken good care of, in case he died, and I promised that—laughing at him for his superstitions.

"He assured me that his fears of death were very well grounded, although he refused to tell me what the grounds were."

Harry interrupted at this point to ask: "Did a man whose first name was Mike ever visit you?"

"Oh, yes, Gus always sent the money for Morris by Mike Edwards; a good-hearted soul, who went wrong and is trying to begin over again. Gus always had a soft heart for such men."

"Do you know of any particular enemies of Mr. Rivers who were desperate enough to cause his death?" asked Harry.

"No, because Gus was too well liked among men. He was a good fellow—too good for his own good."

"But he had enemies?"

"Oh, yes, we all have. Gus had his share of them, but I do not think any of them were serious."

"Do you know a man by the name of Wogan?"

"Yes, he was one of Gus' friends. Gus told me one time that Wogan was a former criminal, and that when he was running the Black Bull—a free-and-easy—in the old days, he had caught Wogan choking a woman to death and had him sent up. But he made it all up with Wogan when he got out, two years ago. He loaned him money, and used his influence to get him into politics."

"And do you know a man by the name of Henbury?"

"I've heard Gus mention him as a friend of Wogan's. But I do not know who he is."

"You say that Mr. Rivers predicted his death this evening. Have you no idea as to what made him make this prediction?"

She paused.

"You know, Mrs. Rivers, that I will be compelled to place you under arrest to-night as a witness, so you may as well tell me now as later, if you have any information upon the matter."

"Am I to be arrested?"

"I regret to say that it will be necessary."

"Oh, pshaw!" she exclaimed, petulantly. "I wanted

to take Morris down to my mother's home in South Jersey to-night."

"Are you not aware that Mr. Rivers has made not only his will, but his life insurance policies to you?"

"Did he?" she asked, in some surprise.

"Why not?"

"I did not think that he cared that much for me," she said.

"For whom would he care?"

"There were others," she answered, evasively.

"Other women?"

"One other, at least, to whom I rather expected he would leave his money when he died."

"And she?"

"Well, there's no use in talking about it as long as you say the money was left to me. Do you know how much there is of it?"

"No."

"I suppose I get what she doesn't."

"You get one hundred thousand from the life insurance, even if there is nothing else."

"Are you sure?"

"Positive."

"Then she may have the rest."

"But who is she?" Harry asked.

"Mazie Remington."

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE ACTRESS.

Gond had been sitting in the reception room at the Harrison House for almost an hour before anyone either entered or left the place.

The fact that Wogan, Henbury and Edwards were still up in room twenty-one, seemed to have no effect upon him.

Had he known that they were there planning the death, not only of a cabman, but of the widow of Gus Rivers, Mr. Detective Gond might have laid down his expensive cigar and gone to work.

As it was, they had been plotting and planning for sixty minutes, losing time that was valuable and that they could never make up, all because Mike Edwards was a clever man.

He knew his business too well to be ordered into a murder without getting his price for the crime in advance.

While this was going on the strange woman with the dark hair, whom Young Broadbrim had supposed to be a sister to Mazie Remington, let herself quietly into

the hotel, and went along the hallway, keeping well out of sight of anyone who might be in the reception room.

She hastened up the stairs on tiptoe, and, going into room number eight, she locked the door and began hastily to gather together the dresses and other wear that were spread about in the bureau drawers and the wardrobe.

So intent was she upon avoiding notice of those in the house, that she did not see the dark figure of a man some distance behind her.

When she left the hotel at first she had gone to the theater, and from there to a telegraph office and sent a telegram to some friends in New York to the effect that she would be over on the next train.

Then she had waited about, outside the hotel until she thought the coast was clear.

The man who followed her looked somewhat like an actor of the variety stage. His hair was rather long, his beard heavy, and at least a day old; his clothes were slightly out of style.

He was, at a guess, thirty-five or forty years of age.

When the woman went up the stairway, he followed at a safe distance behind her, without exciting the suspicion either of the clerk or detective Gond, who were engaged in conversation over the register desk.

After the woman had closed the door of number eight, he entered room number seven, to which he carried a key. He locked the door behind him, and, going to the window, he raised it noiselessly and stepped out upon the fire escape.

He made his way along this to the window of room number eight, and, without warning, raised the sash and curtain and stepped inside.

"Don't be frightened," he said, as he turned and lowered the window and the shade behind him.

"What do you mean, sir!" the woman demanded. "How dare you enter my room in this manner!"

"My dear lady, I was compelled to do so."

"Are you a thief? Do you want my jewelry? If you do, take it and go. Here are my rings."

"No, indeed, they are of no use to me."

"Then what do you want?"

"I merely want about five minutes' conversation with you?"

"What about?"

"About the death of Gus Rivers."

She gasped, caught at her breast with both hands and reeled and would have fallen, had not the man quickly gone to her aid and supported her.

"Don't lose your nerve," he said, reassuringly. "I am a detective."

"I knew it would come," she cried, "I knew it would come! Oh, what are they going to do with me?"

"Nothing if you are innocent."

"Before God I am!" she said, dramatically.

"That remains to be proven."

"I can prove it."

"You were the last person in Mr. Rivers' room, were you not?"

"Yes."

"Did you kill him?"

"I did not!"

"Then why have you acted so strangely. Why have you dyed your hair since the tragedy occurred?"

"In order to escape the notoriety that I knew the thing would bring upon me."

"Is this your handkerchief?" she was asked, as the man displayed a blood-stained handkerchief to her.

"Yes, I tried to stop the wound with it, and see how useless it was, I fled."

"Then you know who killed Gus Rivers?"

"He killed himself."

"Are you sure?"

"Do you see that hole in the wall where a gas pipe once ran through? I saw and heard all, and was powerless to prevent the deed."

"What did you hear?"

"I heard just what Gus promised that I should hear. He told me at the supper table to-night, that he was eating his last meal on earth. I laughed and joked with him about it, but he was in dead earnest. He seemed half afraid to tell me much, for this fellow Henbury, was watching us the whole time. But as I had an occasional chance he told me to be on the watch about seven o'clock."

"So this man, Henbury, shot him?"

"No, he shot himself."

"I do not understand."

"Neither did I until after the thing had happened. And then my one thought was to get away, to get the horror out of my sight. As we left the supper table Gus slipped this note into my hands." She paused and handed him a note which he read:

"DEAR MAZIE: There are three men after me for money. They have been bold enough to tell me they have given me until seven o'clock to-night to live. Don't breathe a word or they will make it bad for you. I am never out of their sight. They have

leged me now for a month or more. Turn where you will, Henbury's eyes are always upon me. I have sent my wife to come to-night. I want to tell her that I have left all to her with the exception of my New York property, which I have always promised to you. That you shall have. I transferred the deeds to you to-day, and they are in my lawyer's hands. You know who he is. I managed to sneak a telegram to a New York detective this morning, at least I intended that it should be a telegram, but as I approached the telegraph office this Henbury was at my heels. So I wasted my opportunity and mailed it under his very nose. I have sent for my wife not only to tell her about my will, but to warn her. If she comes while they are watching me, she will have to go away without being told. So I want you to listen, and if you hear me talking about something else beside the will, I want you to look her up at once and warn her. They will kill her. This man, Mike Edwards, tell her, whom she trusts, because she imagines that I do—is one of the three men who are hounding me. The other man is Wogan, a politician. Have them arrested if you can, before they skip out. Do not try to prevent the crime. They are working out an old grudge against me. I had all three of them lodged in jail many months ago when I kept the Black Bull, and they have forgotten it. I did manage to report this to the police sometime ago, but they laughed at me for my folly. Wogan has a strong pull, and I could bring no real evidence against him. Do what you can afterward. God bless you, Mazie. It's the end. There's nothing for it, but rather than let them shoot me down like a dog, I'll shoot myself. Remember, seven to-night. This is written in my room in the darkness. Henbury has missed me. I am lying upon my bed with the light out. If a man comes from Josiah Broadbrim, the New York detective, turn this over to him, if not, mail it to him at once.

"Your old friend,

Gus."

"Imagine my feeling when I read the note!" the woman exclaimed.

"Were you so spellbound that you could not telegraph for an officer?" her visitor demanded.

"A moment afterward I was. I lingered downstairs for a moment after supper with the note in my hand all crumpled up. I did not suspect its contents, you can well suppose."

"And when did you read it?"

"When I came up to my room, sometime later. I supposed it was a little love note or something of the sort."

"And when you read it, why did you not report the matter to the police?"

"I read it just after a woman left his room, whom

I guess was his wife. I could not help but hear him kiss her good-by. Then I read the note. Well, I did not know what to make of it at first. It took my breath. Then all that Gus had whispered to me at the table came back to me. My first inclination was to run downstairs and send for an officer, but I remembered the injunction in his note and hesitated.

"While I stood here undecided what move to make, I heard a man's voice in Gus' room. I looked through the little peep hole there, and saw it was the man called Henbury.

"The two men were talking in low voices, and, as I looked and listened, I became spellbound. I could not realize that before my very eyes such a horrible tragedy was about to take place.

"The man, Henbury, asked Gus whether the will had been made out to his wife, and Gus answered that it had, but begged them not to harm her. He said that he would give them any money they wished, but that they must not harm his wife.

"Henbury promised that the wife should not be harmed, and then Gus said, 'So my finish has come, eh? Well, I'll die game, Hen. You've beaten me out.' I saw Gus take a revolver from his pocket, but this man Henbury stopped him.

"'No,' Henbury said, 'that will make too much noise, use one of these.' And he handed Gus a cartridge from his pocket. I know now, although I did not know it then, that this cartridge was prepared in some way, so that when it exploded there was no noise.

"I was unprepared for what happened next. I saw Gus point the pistol at his breast. I heard the click—and Gus fell to the floor. Henbury turned off the light quickly and went out of the room, closing the door softly behind him.

"I almost fainted. But my first thought was for Gus. I ran out into the hall and into his room. I turned on the light and tried to stop the flow of blood with my hand and handkerchief.

"I soon saw that it was useless, for Gus rapidly became stiff and cold. I knew he was dead, and I also knew that were I to be found there with him, it might be a task for me to prove my innocence.

"I knew, too, that even if I could prove that I was not guilty, many things might go against me professionally. This is, as you know, a cheap hotel, and I am supposed to stop at the best. I came here because Gus was here, and he and I have been good old friends.

"I was afraid, too, that if I were arrested I might be forced to give up my work for this week, if not for the rest of the season.

"So, with these conflicting thoughts in my mind, I turned off the light and left the room by way of the fire escape.

"Now that I have told you all I know, I hope you will be a gentleman and help to conceal my name as much as possible."

"Trust me, I will do all I can for you."

"May I know your name?" she asked.

"I am the man whom you refused to admit to your room. In other words, the messenger boy who had a package that you never received. My name is Wilson. Now take my advice, Miss Remington. Wash that mascaro out of your hair as quickly as possible. It will only go against you. This sudden disguise has done more harm than good. And while you are doing that I will take a look downstairs and see how things are going there."

Leaving her to return to her former appearance, Young Broadbrim left the room.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE SOLUTION OF THE PUZZLE.

Young Broadbrim had lost no time after listening to the story of Mrs. Rivers.

He had received her promise that she would appear at the inquest the next morning, and had advised her to go to a hotel in the city and remain in hiding until officials had sent for her. He assured her that it might be dangerous for her to be found by any of the gang who had been the cause of her husband's death.

She readily consented to Harry's suggestions, and after he had escorted her to the Continental Hotel he hurried back to the Casino, intending not to lose sight of Mazie Remington.

He went direct to the manager of the playhouse and explained his business. The manager escorted him behind the scenes by way of the auditorium, and thus, although Harry did not know it, they avoided Ballagher, who stood guard at the stage door.

Harry had told the manager that he desired to speak to Miss Remington's understudy, and this was truth.

He waited until the curtain had fallen upon the third act of the play, and then the manager conducted him to the dressing room of Miss Hazel Bingham, who was playing Miss Remington's rôle.

His interview with her was very short.

"Has Miss Remington returned since eight o'clock?" he asked, after the formality of introduction.

"Yes," she said.

"How long since?"

"She just left here."

"Do you know where she was going?"

"Yes, to Eighth and Vine to send a telegram, from there to the nearest drug store, and from there to her hotel."

"She is a blonde, is she not?"

"She was," answered the woman, with a smile, "until seven-thirty or eight o'clock to-night, and she took a sudden freak and became a brunette."

"Thank you," said Harry, and after bidding good-night he went out upon the stage.

"Hope there's nothing wrong," asked the manager with some anxiety.

"Oh, no," Harry assured him, except that she might give me some very valuable information on a case I am working on just now, and I haven't been able to locate her to-night. Let me see, there is a Mr. Laurence in the company, isn't there?"

"Yes, he's through in the third act; I guess you'll find him in there," he concluded, as he pointed to the dressing room.

Harry thanked him for his kindness, and after knocking at the door of the dressing room he was admitted by an actor whom he knew quite well.

"Say, Laurence," he began, "I'm on a tough case over here and you are just the man who can help me."

"Glad of it," exclaimed the actor, as he removed the grease paint from his face.

"I want a good disguise."

"I'm your man."

"I came over from New York without a stitch, because I didn't think I'd have use for it."

"Don't say another word. There's my trunk full of wardrobe and there's all the grease paints you'll need. Help yourself."

And Harry did help himself so well that within five minutes he passed out of the stage door under the nose of Detective Ballagher, looking like an actor who had seen better days.

It was readily seen how Mazie Remington had eluded the city detective by a change in the color of her hair.

Harry at once followed the route Mazie had taken, as had been described to him by her understudy.

caught up with her before she arrived at the Harrison House, and the scene had taken place as was recorded in the last chapter.

When Harry left her room he went down to the desk and asked for Mr. Henbury.

"Yes, he's in," said Brewer. "He's up in twenty-one. Know where that is?"

"No," Harry answered, congratulating himself that he had fooled the clerk with his hasty disguise.

"That's in the third floor in the other house. You'll find a connecting door between the houses right there."

When Harry had arrived near to the door of room twenty-one, he paused and listened.

There were voices in there, and from their boisterous tones he rightly supposed that the men had been drinking.

He approached nearer and listened.

"Say, it's ten o'clock!" exclaimed Wogan.

"Let's have another drink," said Henbury, "and let Mike begin on his joyful task."

"Oh, it's agreed then that I am to get another fifty dollars, and also a share in the divvy?" asked the man dressed as Mike, whom Harry did not know.

"I'll get your third all right," Wogan assured him, "but the cabby must go to-night. By midnight we want to be on our way to Cleveland."

"Well, the cabby will be looked after," said Mike, "if I can find him."

"Oh, you'll have no trouble in that," Wogan assured him. "Just call up the Standard Stables and ask for Murphy."

"Is he an Irishman?" asked Mike.

"He's an Orangeman," Wogan said, in an endeavor to arouse the ire of Mike Edwards.

"An Orangeman, eh? I'll take good care of the likes of him!"

Harry paid no attention to the oaths that followed this statement. He was wondering what ruse he could work to get into the room.

He was sure the door was locked, for they were men too well acquainted with crime to leave their door open when such a conversation as the one now in progress was on the program.

Should he send for Gond and with him break in upon the trio? No, he said to himself. Gond had told him earlier in the evening that Gus Rivers had shot himself, and it was quite evident to Harry now that Gond had not told what he believed.

If the city detective had believed such a thing, why was he still waiting in the reception room downstairs?

So Harry decided that he would enter the room by himself, surprise the trio and—

But further meditation was interrupted by the sound of some one coming up the stairway.

Harry looked over the banister and saw, to his dismay, that it was Detective Gond.

Without doubt, Harry was cornered. This unexpected situation must force his hand. He had either to rap boldly upon the door of room twenty-one or become a suspected character by the city detective.

In the hope of delaying the climax, Harry hurriedly went up another flight of stairs to the fourth and top floor.

But Gond had seen the movement.

When Harry reached the top of the stairway Gond was at his heels.

"Anything I may do for you?" asked Gond, as calmly as though nothing had occurred.

"Yes, I'm looking for twenty-one. Can you direct me to it?" Harry answered in a disguised voice.

"Direct you to it?" Gond repeated. "Why, you passed it on your way up."

"Oh, did I? How stupid of me! It's on the floor below, isn't it? I was thinking that this was the third floor. It was very kind in you to show me the way."

And Harry began to descend the stairs.

He determined to elude Gond if the opportunity presented itself, and that was why he darted into room twenty-two, the door of which he found open.

No sooner had he entered the room than he closed and locked the door behind him.

"Open the door!" came Gond's commanding voice.

But Harry was silently raising the window.

In another moment he was out upon the fire escape and making his way down into the next balcony. He entered room seven, by way of the window, passed out by way of the door, knocked at room eight, and after stating his name to Miss Remington, he was admitted.

"Just a little joke," he assured her. "Give me your soap and towels, quick."

She hastened to oblige him.

In less than three minutes Young Broadbrim had removed his disguise and was himself once more.

Thanking Miss Remington for her kindness, he went out upon the fire escape again, entered room seven and came out of the door just as Detective Gond was coming down the stairway.

"Hello, Gond!" he said. "Something new on hand?"

"Yes," Gond answered, in some surprise.

"I thought so. You told me that you had given this Rivers' case up."

"Oh, yes, gave that up right away. That was suicide pure and simple. Going downstairs?"

"I'll be down in a minute."

Gond went down with the intention of securing the pass key, and entering room twenty-two, in order to arrest the old actor who had so mysteriously eluded him.

In the meantime Harry ran up the stairway and knocked at room twenty-one.

"Hello!" said Wogan.

"Did you ring for drinks?" Harry asked.

"No, but we'll take them," Henbury answered.

"Three whiskies here," Harry said, in a high pitched voice that did not sound unlike that of the bell boy.

"Bring 'em in," called Wogan.

Henbury opened the door.

"Good-evening, gentlemen," said Young Broadbrim, as he entered and covered them with two revolvers. "Rather an unexpected visit, I know. Trust you are glad to see me. Henbury, just push that button there—the treat is on me."

When Wogan had recovered from his surprise his nerve came back to him. "No, it isn't," he said, "this treat is on me. You are the cleverest kid in the business!"

He pressed the electric button.

When the bell boy appeared, Harry said: "If Mr. Gond is down there, bring him up; also, bring a round of drinks.

"I'll take a good cigar myself."

"How did you do it?" asked Henbury.

"You'll hear all about it in court," Harry answered him. "The only thing that made me escape from y gas trap was the thought that my life was not insured.

The trio laughed a hollow laugh—the laugh of men who know that their hours are numbered.

When Gond arrived Harry explained the situation to him. At first the city detective could not believe that Wogan was in any way concerned.

"He'll only get out," he said.

"No man ever gets out of the trap that he's bound for," said Young Broadbrim. "I've got evidence enough to hang the three of them!"

And so he had.

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#### THE END.

We desire to inform our readers that after the present number, The Young Broadbrim Weekly will be discontinued.

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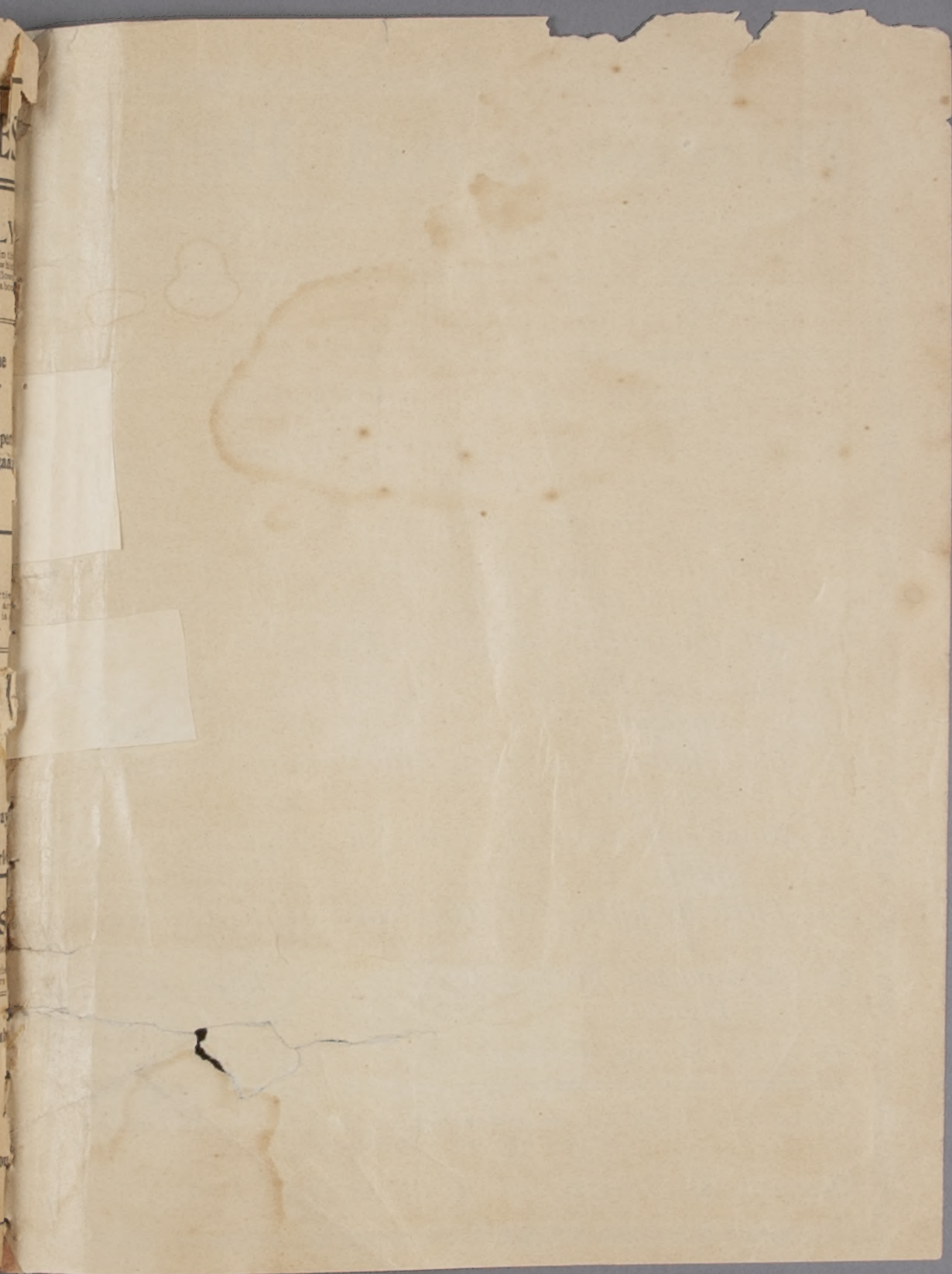
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